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NIKKEI (Page 2) (Full)
May 19, 2009

"We have finally made it this far." Having lunch with his closest aides, including Hirofumi Hirano and Yorihiisa Matsuno, at a Chinese restaurant near the Diet on May 18, Democratic Party of Japan (DPJ) President Yukio Hatoyama, who selected the new party leadership on the previous day," responded to them with a smile, "You all helped me."

"I want to take part in party head talks"

The support rating for the DPJ in a poll carried out jointly by Nihon Keizai Shimbun and TV Tokyo rose by 10 points. Referring to the next Lower House election, Hatoyama on an evening TV Tokyo program presented figures that were more bullish than those the party aimed at when Ichiro Ozawa was president: "We must secure at least 160 to 170 seats out of 300 single-seat constituencies." He said with great eagerness, "I want to take part in party head talks proactively."

Katsuya Okada, who was appointed to serve as secretary general, on the afternoon of the same day took over Hatoyama's duties as secretary general at the party headquarters. He told reporters, "I have joined the leadership after a hiatus of four years." Visiting Okada's office in the Diet building, Kozo Watanabe encouraged him, saying, "The public supports you. Do it with your head held high."

Other opposition parties, which had established a friendly relationship with Ozawa, are anxious. Secretary General of the People's New Party (PNP) called Okada early in the morning and proposed, "Let's hold a meeting of the three secretaries general (including the Social Democratic Party's secretary general) as soon

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as possible." Okada responded, "I am not as stubborn as people say. I am rather flexible."

Though Hatoyama and Okada are zeroing in on Prime Minister Taro Aso in confronting the ruling parties, party members' concerns are fixed on Hatoyama's relationship with Ozawa, who is virtually in charge of leading the party's Lower House election campaign. Asked by reporters whether Hatoyama was unable to grasp the outcome of a survey of the situation concerning the upcoming election, Okada winced, noting, "I have not heard about the details. However, it is impossible that the secretary general does not know of such an outcome."

Prime Minister Aso spouted at a Liberal Democratic Party (LDP) executive meeting on the evening of the 18th: "Whoever becomes the president of the DPJ, the point is whether the person has capabilities to run the government. The LDP should stake out differences with the DPJ, by speaking out of its own accord. We cannot possibly evade the consumption tax hike issue for as long as four years."

The outcome of the opinion poll exposed the fragility of public support for Aso. The support rating for his cabinet, which had been on the recovery track, dropped to 30 PERCENT . Aso took a beating in the poll, which asked respondents who they considered to be most appropriate as prime minister after the Lower House election.

Even so, Internal Affairs Minister Kunio Hatoyama, the prime minister's close friend, said, "That rating is probably a celebratory favor (given by poll respondents). It was good that all media organizations covered his election, and yet the support rating for him was as low as that." LDP Election Committee Vice Chairman Yoshihide Suga told reporters in Yokohama: "This support rating is temporary. Nothing has changed." The unanimous view of lawmakers close to the prime minister is that the current popularity of the DPJ will not last long.

However, these responses given by the prime minister's side are not necessary in accord with responses of all the ruling party members. Former prime minister Yasuo Fukuda on the afternoon of the 18th cautioned Chief Cabinet Secretary Takeo Kawamura who visited him at his office in the Lower House Members' Office Building: "The trend could change again. You should not drop your guard. Brace yourself."

Aso returning to danger zone

A senior LDP official said, "There will never be a movement to oust Aso." However, public support ratings for his cabinet have begun taking a downward turn. Prime Minister Aso is now about to return to the danger zone in maintaining his administration. A situation in which Prime Minister Aso, who has not quite turned around the harsh situation facing his cabinet, and President Hatoyama jostle each other about is about to begin.

(2) DPJ should openly discuss future options for security-treaty policy, Article 9

YOMIURI (Page 13) (Full)
May 19, 2009

By Masayuki Yamauchi, professor at the University of Tokyo

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The Democratic Party of Japan (DPJ) has advocated a review of the Japan-U.S. Status of Forces Agreement (SOFA), a key part in the Japan-U.S. Security Treaty, even while expressing a willingness to keep the Japan-U.S. alliance as the basis for Japan's national security. Remembering former president Ichiro Ozawa's remark that the U.S. Navy 7th Fleet would be sufficient (for Japan's national security)," many people wonder if the DPJ is willing to radically review the ideology and operation of the U.S-Japan Security Treaty. I would expect the new Hatoyama-Okada leadership to explain this point in detail.

The DPJ is also aiming to transfer U.S. Marines Corps bases in Okinawa to areas outside of Okinawa. If this idea is translated into action, the burden on the local communities now hosting the bases would be reduced. In this sense, this idea is appropriate, but I wonder whether the DPJ, in scrambling to grab political power, will be able to give a proper explanation to the residents of the prefectures that would be involved in the new plan.

In the current Diet session, the DPJ has opposed the government's antipiracy bill, which governs the dispatch of Maritime Self-Defense Force (MSDF) vessels (to waters off Somalia). The party is instead calling for sending destroyers possessed by the Japan Coast Guard (JCG). I do not think it is proper to prepare legislation in each case the SDF is dispatched overseas. Even so, this cannot be used as the reason for imposing a heavier burden on the JCG, which engages in coastal patrolling. While keeping constitutional reform in mind, the DPJ should consider how to establish a new international peace order for the 21st century and future options for contributions by the SDF.

If the DPJ is aiming at a change in government, the party must change its ambiguous stance about the right to collective self-defense and constitutional revision.

In an open debate conducted at the Japan Press Club on May 15, new DPJ President Hatoyama said: "Mr. Ozawa takes the view that the UN is the ultimate (decisions at the UN take top priority), but I take a UN-centered policy, at most." Ozawa asserted that under a resolution of the UN Security Council, SDF troops should be allowed to use armed force, regardless of the relevant stipulation in Article 9 of the Constitution. Hatoyama said: "I do not intend to follow (Ozawa's) policy that Japan should do everything that the UN has decided." He showed a view different from Ozawa's. Many people probably are perplexed at this wide perception gap between the incoming and outgoing presidents over matters related to the Constitution.

Hatoyama puts forth "a diplomacy of fellowship" as his political principle. I feel rather awkward about this slogan, because it gives an impression that issues pending between two countries with different national interests and governance ideologies can be settled at the level of romanticism. I do not think it is proper for a person in a responsible person to set forth such a principle. Hatoyama is interested in the Northern Territories issue under the

influence of his grandfather Ichiro Hatoyama, a former prime minister who signed the Japan-Soviet Union joint declaration, but Russia, which has faith in the ideology of power, could cleverly use the principle of "fellowship" against Japan,

If the DPJ gives priority to the goal of taking over political

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power, the party may find it difficult to step into discussing collective self-defense and constitutional revision. But a regime change will be brought about under the initiative of the largest party in the opposition camp. Although some say that foreign and security policies are not vote-getting, the next House of Representatives election is expected to be different in nature from the past elections. If the DPJ seeks the voters' judgment on which political parties (the LDP or the DPJ) they choose as the party in power, the main opposition party should openly discuss future options for the nation, such as what to do about the Japan-U.S. security arrangements and the use of the right to collective self-defense. Hatoyama has said that he outgrew his old self (under President Ozawa). We expect him to come up with practical diplomatic policies. The people also hope that the DPJ will detail its policies its policy manifesto for the next Lower House election.

(3) Healing the scars of war: On the Japanese government's apology to American POWs

MAINICHI (Page 4) (Full)
Evening, May 18, 2009

Kazuhiko Togo, visiting professor at Kyoto Sangyo University, former ambassador to the Netherlands

One of the deep scars between Japan and the United States relating to the memories of the war is about to be healed.

I think this is one of the achievements of the Taro Aso cabinet that will go down in history. I would like to pay my sincere respect to the work done by my former colleagues at the Ministry of Foreign Affairs. It is unfortunate though that such a momentous event is taking place practically unnoticed by the Japanese people.

The question of mistreatment of soldiers and officers of the allied forces during the Pacific War was dealt with through the trial of Class B and C war criminals and payment of compensation to the countries of the prisoners-of-war under Article 16 of the San Francisco Peace Treaty. However, since the 1990s, former POWs whose trauma had not been healed have filed cases at Japanese courts seeking redress. The Japanese government began a project to promote reconciliation by inviting the former POWs and their families to Japan to meet Japanese individuals involved with the events during the war by launching the "Peace, Friendship, and Exchange Initiative" in 1995. By 2004, 784 former POWs were invited to Japan from Britain, 425 from the Netherlands, and 56 from Australia. Activities under the initiative were concluded in 2004, but reconciliation projects have continued through funding by the concerned ministries.

However, American POWs have been excluded from the initiative. As illustrated by accounts such as the Death March of Bataan (the Philippines), the treatment of American POWs was in no way any better than that of the Europeans. Then, why were they not part of the initiative? If this was not the result of bureaucratic apathy, then there could be only one reason.

There seemed to be popular sentiment about whether there was any need for further reconciliation with the American soldiers who were prisoners-of-war, for they had killed many Japanese citizens with their atomic bombings, carpet bombings, and other operations. Such seemed to have been taken into consideration. However, cruelty by

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one side does not justify cruelty by the other side. The fact that there is such a sentiment among the Japanese is probably

incomprehensible to almost all Americans. Such culturally-based distrust will shake the very foundation of the alliance. There is a need for somebody to have the courage to break off this negative linkage.

Recently, a friend in the U.S. sent me a copy of the letter sent by Lester Tenney, president of the American Defenders of Bataan and Corregidor (ADBC) to President Barack Obama and Ambassador to the U.S. Ichiro Fujisaki. Tenney has worked patiently to convince the Japanese government to treat American POWs in the same manner as the British, the Dutch, and the Australians. He also contributed an essay to the April 15 Issue of the Japan Times detailing ADBC's recent activities.

1) In November, 2008, Ambassador and Mrs Fujisaki were the first senior Japanese officials to meet him and listen seriously to his account of his bitter experience.

2) Based on his request at this meeting, he received a letter in December from the Japanese government through the ambassador stating: "We express our sincere apologies for inflicting damage and pain on many people, including those who experienced the tragedy of Bataan and Corregidor."

3) In February, 2009, a statement based on the cabinet decision that the apology applies to "all former POWs" was conveyed to Diet members.

4) We, the American POWs, accept the apology that the Japanese government has come up with after its long search.

The ADBC will be disbanded this month. Before the group is dissolved, Tenney expresses hope for the American POWs to be included in the "Peace, Friendship, and Exchange Initiative" or a similar framework. He says that if this is realized, he would like to invite Ambassador Fujisaki to the last meeting of ADBC and present this as the final embodiment of the reconciliation. I truly hope that this will materialize.

In light of the above positive steps, have there been any changes in the moves on the American side with regard to the atomic bombings?

In this regard, Mainichi Shimbun has reported several times that with former Kyodo News correspondent in Washington Fumio Matsuo taking the lead, an idea for the U.S. president to offer flowers in Hiroshima and for the Japanese prime minister to offer flowers at Pearl Harbor is being considered.

Two years ago, this idea was discussed at a seminar on history issues at the University of California in Santa Barbara, where Matsuo was invited as a guest speaker. The reaction of the participants was that this was "premature."

However, I had an opportunity to hold discussions with some of the participants at that time this past January, and the reaction of the American scholar who had been most negative about the plan had changed. He said: "This idea may move forward under Obama."

History is moving in a positive direction, albeit slowly.

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(4) Editorial: Concern about possible dual power structure in Hatoyama-led DPJ

NIKKEI (Page 2) (Full)
May 19, 2009

The new leadership of the Democratic Party of Japan led by President Yukio Hatoyama will be formally launched today. Former President Ichiro Ozawa will become vice president in charge of election strategy. Katsuya Okada, Hatoyama's rival in the leadership election, will assume the post of secretary general. Although Hatoyama technically has formed a unified party arrangement, there is a possibility that the new leadership will have a dual power structure, under which Ozawa will continue to wield the real power

in managing the party.

Hatoyama must first eliminate the party's negative image created by the arrest and indictment of Ozawa's state-funded secretary for receiving illegal donations from Nishimatsu Construction Co.

It is hard to say that Ozawa has fully fulfilled his accountability for how he used the money donated by Nishimatsu. The DPJ's response to this issue is being tested. In this respect, it is extremely hard to understand why Ozawa has been retained in a key post responsible for making strategy for the next House of Representatives election. Winning the upcoming election has become the uppermost task for the DPJ for the time being.

Although a court will ultimately resolve the political donation case, the impression that cannot be erased is one of Hatoyama having ignored public opinion, which called on Ozawa to resign as DPJ leader to take responsibility for the scandal. Once the way Nishimatsu Construction made political donations is clarified in the trial that will start soon, the DPJ leadership will find itself under fire.

According to a spot opinion poll conducted on the weekend (May 16-17) by the Nihon Keizai Shimbun along with TV Tokyo, the support rate for the DPJ rose to 38 PERCENT , a 10 point jump over the level of a poll carried out in late April. The approval rate for the LDP, however, dropped three points to 33 PERCENT . The support rates for the LDP and DPJ are now close to the levels the two parties secured in early March when the scandal involving Nishimatsu Construction Co. was uncovered. In the popularity ranking of political parties for the proportional representation segment in the next general election, the DPJ topped the LDP, with the DPJ tallying 41 PERCENT and the LDP securing 28 PERCENT .

However, it is too early to think that the DPJ has completely regained public confidence. The survey found that 47 PERCENT of the public had expectations for Hatoyama, while 49 PERCENT had no expectations of him. The poll was carried out before the leadership lineup was formed. To the question whether Ozawa should remain in a key post, 54 PERCENT of the respondents opposed and 32 PERCENT supported the decision.

The House of Councillors will launch deliberations on May 20 on the fiscal 2009 extra budget. The terms of the Lower House members will end in September. With an eye on the dissolution of the Lower House and snap election, the fierce maneuvering between the ruling and opposition camps will enter a final situation.

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In the DPJ presidential election, the candidates stressed such inward-looking assertions that all party members should play ball and the party should solidify itself like a rock. Taking advantage of such opportunities as a party-heads debate in the Diet, Hatoyama must take responsibility to clarify the DPJ's differences with the LDP.

(5) Editorial: "New DPJ Leadership: A passable restart, but..."

TOKYO SHIMBUN (Page 5) (Full)
May 19, 2009

Democratic Party of Japan (DPJ) President Yukio Hatoyama has appointed his leadership team with party unity as the keyword. While support from the public, which had abandoned the party for a while, has returned, there is also a feeling of hesitation in public opinion with regard to the birth of a "DPJ administration." Whether this hurdle can be overcome will be a litmus test for the new leadership.

Hatoyama has appointed Katsuya Okada, who had distanced himself from Ichiro Ozawa and who ran against him in the presidential election, as secretary general, while Ozawa was named deputy president in charge of election strategy. Yoshihiko Noda, who supported Okada, was given the post of deputy secretary general, in consideration of the sentiments of the younger generation members who seek the

complete elimination of the Ozawa color.

Unity was given top priority since the sole goal is to achieve a change of administration. The appointments reflect the Hatoyama-style shift to a general election mode, with Okada, who enjoyed popular support as the next leader, being designated as the "face" of the election and Ozawa taking charge of the practical work. Even though there has been some criticism of Ozawa's appointment to a senior position, this was probably a realistic decision to count on "Ozawa the election expert," who is feared by the ruling parties.

However, what will be the division of labor between Okada, who will be responsible for giving encouragement to the candidates and heading the election campaign, and Ozawa? While it is said that they have each marked out their territories, will there not be any conflict in the future? If signs of "Ozawa as the power behind the throne" -- which continues to be a subject of concern -- become stronger, this may quickly result in the voters "abandoning the DPJ."

Hatoyama has a sizable lead over Prime Minister Taro Aso in various ad hoc opinion polls conducted by the media on who is more suitable to serve as prime minister. The DPJ also leads the Liberal Democratic Party (LDP) in the voters' choice for the proportional representation ticket. This is good news for Hatoyama's DPJ.

On the other hand, a poll by Kyodo News shows that 50.6 PERCENT of the respondents "have no expectations of Hatoyama," exceeding the 47.5 PERCENT who do. The public want a change of administration, but they are doubtful if the DPJ is up to the job.

With a change of leader, the cover of the book has changed, but what about the contents? Can the party be entrusted with the administration? Are the DPJ's economic policies fully backed by revenue sources? Such are the doubts and concerns of the voters.

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These will have to be dispelled one by one.

The debate in the final stretch of the Diet session will be the perfect opportunity to do so. This can be done at the House of Councillors's deliberation of the FY09 supplementary budget, which is being criticized for creating wasteful funds among other things, and during the party leaders' debate. We hope Mr Hatoyama will take a positive attitude toward the debate with the prime minister and present a concrete vision of the government.

The ruling parties are most probably shocked by the DPJ's unexpected rebound because they had thought that Hatoyama would be easy to handle. The people continue to look at the LDP-New Komeito administration with skepticism. They should analyze quickly why this sudden "reversal of support" happened so easily.

(6) Editorial: Rejection of Guam International Agreement weighs heavily on DPJ

NIKKEI (Page 2) (Full)
May 15, 2009

The House of Councillors voted down in its plenary session on May 13 the Guam International Agreement designed to have the Japanese government contribute up to 2.8 billion dollars as part of the cost of the relocation of 8,000 U.S. Marines and their dependents from Okinawa to Guam. The Democratic Party of Japan (DPJ), the largest party in the Upper House, prevented the agreement from being automatically approved by the Diet at zero hours on May 14. Was (the DPJ) aware of the possibility of its becoming a burden in the future?

The Guam International Agreement is a treaty. Article 61 of the Constitution stipulates that when the two Diet chambers make different decisions on a treaty or when the Upper House fails to take final action within 30 days after the receipt of the treaty passed by the Lower House, the decision of the Lower House shall be the decision of the Diet. For this reason, the agreement was

approved by the Diet, even though it had been voted down in the Upper House.

It is understandable for the DPJ, an opposition party, to feel discontent with the content of the agreement and oppose it in the Lower House. It is also logically natural for the party to take the same attitude in the Upper House. At the same time, the chamber could have waited for half a day to let the treaty clear the Diet automatically. In view of the diplomatic implications of its rejection, the DPJ's step was actually somewhat absurd.

The next Lower House election will take place by the fall, and there is a possibility that the DPJ will take power. A party decision to wait for automatic Diet approval could have hinted at its response in such a case. Meanwhile, the fact that the Upper House voted down the agreement would consequently place a DPJ-centered administration in the future under a political obligation to seek a revision to the agreement in its talks with the United States.

Negotiations would be cumbersome. U.S. reluctance to respond to such a call would delay the overall realignment of U.S. military bases in Japan, including the transfer of U.S. Marines and the relocation of Futenma Air Station. The day to reduce Okinawa's base burden would slip away. A large part of work for managing the Japan-U.S. alliance

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would have to be devoted to them.

Responses to threats to national security, such as the North Korean nuclear issue, might be neglected as a result. The Japan-U.S. alliance might be driven by centrifugal force instead of centripetal force. Once a party opposed a matter in the Lower House, it is natural for it to take the same attitude in the upper chamber as well. But the DPJ apparently did not give thought to its diplomatic implications.

Such was fine if the DPJ was a minor opposition party. But being a party that has the next administration within its reach, the DPJ should have thought through the Guam International Agreement as a matter closely associated with its ability to run the government. Unable to think about the future in the run-up to the presidential election following Ichiro Ozawa's resignation, the DPJ has taken a step that will only make its load even heavier.

(7) Editorial: "Futenma Relocation: Revise plans for acceptance by local community"

MAINICHI (Page 5) (Full)
May 15, 2009

The "Agreement on the Relocation of U.S. Marines in Okinawa to Guam" between the Japanese and U.S. government has been approved by the Diet. The two main points of the agreement are Japan's funding of up to \$2.8 billion and the prohibition of the use of such funds for other purposes. Furthermore, the marines' relocation comes in a package with the relocation of the U.S. Forces' Futenma Air Station in Ginowan City, Okinawa to Nago City.

Problems with the purpose of the funding and the basis of the calculation have not been clarified fully at the Diet deliberations, while the relocation of the Futenma base is experiencing rough sailing in negotiations with the local communities. The government should continue its efforts to come up with clear answers to questions relating to the Guam relocation plan and also work seriously to resolve the issues of Futenma relocation. The reduction of the burden imposed by the bases on Okinawa, which marks the 37th anniversary of its reversion to Japanese administration on May 15, should be realized.

One problem with the agreement is that the question of whether funding the construction of facilities in Guam that will also be used by the U.S. navy and air force in the name of marine relocation does not constitute the use of such funds "for other purposes" remains unanswered. Moreover, the basis for calculating the upper limit of Japan's financial share has not been explained.

A new issue emerged during the Diet deliberations on the number of marines in Okinawa to be reduced with the relocation to Guam. The government had explained that "some 8,000 marines and their families, making a total of about 9,000 will move to Guam" and there is a clear provision on this in the agreement. However, the size of reduction is actually the reduction of the authorized troop size from 18,000 to 10,000. The actual number of marines in Okinawa right now is approximately 13,000, so the actual cutback will only be around 3,000. The "reduction of 8,000 troops" has been symbolic of the reduction of the burden on Okinawa. Therefore, the lightening of the burden will be less than what had been explained. There is no denying that this constitutes a de facto revision of the original

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plan.

Even as doubts about the agreement remain, the relocation of Futenma Air Station, which is located near the urban center of Ginowan City, needs to be implemented for the sake of the safety of the local residents and in order to resolve noise and other environmental issues.

Thirteen years have passed since the Japanese and U.S. governments agreed on the return of Futenma. The U.S. Forces Japan realignment road map agreed upon by the two governments in 2006 provides for the completion of the facility replacing Futenma in the coastal area of Camp Schwab in Nago City by 2014. A conclusion has to be reached by next spring. Okinawa Prefecture and Nago City demand that the substitute facility be built farther from the coast than the location the two governments have chosen in order to deal with noise and environmental problems. The government should respect the wishes of the local governments and residents, deal with the matter flexibly, and reach an agreement at an early date.

Meanwhile, the policy of the Democratic Party of Japan (DPJ) on Futenma relocation as stated in its "Okinawa Vision 2008" calls for "looking at the possibility of relocation outside Okinawa and aiming at relocation outside Japan." Does this mean that the agreement will be reviewed if the DPJ takes over power? We would like to see the party come up with a concrete plan for realizing its Okinawa policy under its new president as the general election approaches.

ZUMWALT